

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats

James A. Amann
Speaker of the House



Christopher Donovan
House Majority Leader

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2020 VISION FOR CONNECTICUT'S CHILDREN **Legislation shifts dollars to prevention programs from crisis services**

Calling it '*2020 Vision for Connecticut's Children*', Speaker of the House Jim Amann (D-Milford) wants to re-direct state dollars spent on children away from crisis services and toward preventative programs.

According to the State Prevention Council's 2002 Prevention Services Funding report, only about 2% of state spending goes toward prevention. Amann is calling for that amount to increase to at least 10% by year 2020.

"Focusing on prevention not only makes sense for the well being of our children, but also makes fiscal sense with future savings in areas such as juvenile justice and unemployment," Amann said. "Whether it's school readiness, after school programs and healthcare for children, these are all areas that deserve more resources and make a great long term investment for taxpayers."

The bill (RB5254), which will be the subject of a legislative public hearing Tuesday before the Children's Committee, also calls for a 'prevention budget' to be made a permanent part of the Governor's proposed biennial budget, and strengthens the ability of the Prevention Council to track prevention dollars.

Amann announced the initiative at a State Capitol news conference with members of the legislature's Children's Committee as well as the state Commission on Children, and Dr. Edward Zigler, Director of Yale University's Center in Child Development and Social Policy, and retired CEO of People's Bank David Carson.

"I thank Speaker Amann for his leadership in this area of children's policy," said Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director Commission on Children. "The successful growth of the

child and the economy go hand in hand. All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on foundational capacities that are developed during childhood. Preventing failure and investing in success is the best stock portfolio for Connecticut."

Eight key state agencies are targeted under the plan to begin shifting more resources toward prevention. For example, less than one percent of the Department of Children and Families and Department of Social Services annual budgets are currently spent on prevention programs.

"Prevention efforts have the greatest fiscal and human benefits of any investment that society can make," said Zigler. "Our knowledge base is large and the evidence is now clear that the greatest benefits accrue when our prevention efforts are directed at the earliest years of life, the period of very rapid brain development."

State statute defines 'prevention' as policies and programs that promote healthy, safe and productive lives, and reduce the likelihood of crime, violence, substance abuse, illness, academic failure and other socially destructive behaviors.

"Regardless of whether the issue is health, education or welfare, children respond to early intervention, and the costs are less than the costs of remediation," Carson said.

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Eight State Agencies' Appropriations for Prevention Services for Children and Youth Fiscal Year 2002¹

(Budget figures contain both federal and state appropriations)

State Agency	Agency Budget	Agency Spending on Prevention	Percentage of Agency Budget Spent on Prevention
Education	\$1.9 billion	\$72.6 million	4%
Public Health	\$77.8 million	\$56.2 million	72%
Mental Retardation	\$696.2 million	\$32.4 million	5%
Policy and Management	\$171 million	\$12.9 million	8%
Social Services	\$3.5 billion	\$13.8 million	0.4%
Mental Health and Addiction Services	\$431.6 million	\$10.5 million	2%
Children's Trust Fund ²	\$5.6 million	\$5.6 million	100%
Children and Families	\$550.3 million	\$3.7 million	0.7%
Total	\$7.3 billion	\$207.7 million	2.8%

¹ Spending data from eight agencies was captured in "Prevention Services Spending" report from period July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002 published by the State Prevention Council

² Created by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1983, the Children's Trust Fund is "responsible for supporting local efforts that help families and communities to be responsive to children and to ensure their positive growth and development."